



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

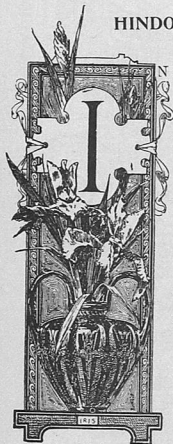
Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

He believes that a beautiful decoration acts as a balm to the careworn, overworked, man or woman of the present age, and that art has a moral power that cannot be overestimated. Besides this, he believes that art is a great national force, and that no nation can go to the front without its help. The highest expression of the nation lies not in the strength of its army and navy, but in the putting forth of its art force. We see to-day England and America alike dominated by French eighteenth century art ideas, and even the homes of the far West, as well as those of the East, are paying homage to the Louis XV. and Empire styles. Italy and Japan, also nations in which art has been highly developed, have impressed upon the Western hemisphere the splendor of their decorative genius.



HINDOO ART AND MYTHOLOGY.

In Hindoo mythology, Brahma, that is, Parabrahma (the Great Brahma) is regarded as the Supreme Being, the Soul of the World, an eternal essence, of no sex, in which are inherent all things. The name is derived from the root *brith*, "to expand," denoting the universally expanding essence of an infinite, imperishable existence. Just as the sun radiates light and heat, both of which essences are manifestations of his far-off fires, so also Brahma has a thousand manifestations. The thousand gods and demi-gods of the Hindoo Pantheon are all manifestations of Brahma. The superior deities are supposed to be immortal, but as compared with Brahma, are perishable, for it is conceivable that different interpretations of the subordinate duties would alter their characteristics so much as to completely change their functions and nature, an occurrence very largely indulged in in Hindoo mythology.

Brahma exists in two states, therefore, the one unseen and imperishable, and the other manifested and perishable. The imperishable is the Supreme Being; the perishable is the universe, or Brahmah, the first incarnation of the deity, whose name is distinguished by having the final vowel long. Brahma is also addressed by the sacred word *Aum*.

That particular manifestation of the multiform Brahma which we call the world—composed of earth, sky and heaven—is called Vishnu, who represents the upbuilding, or creative principle. When the world or matter changes its form and is dissolved into simple being, the distinctive power of Brahma is represented by Siva, the destroyer. These three deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, form the Hindoo trinity, all manifestations of the Supreme Brahma.

In the tableau of Hindoo art on page 188, entitled Brahma, the Soul of the World, we see in the central panel Vishnu, the creator of the world and preserver of life, being himself created by Brahma, seated in a lotus that springs from the navel of Vishnu.

In the Mahābhārata, Brahma is said to have issued from a lotus that sprung from the navel of Vishnu. This idea, however, is convertible to the idea, Brahma being the universe, is greater than Vishnu, the world; consequently, according to the process of nature, he gave life to Vishnu, who is his alter-ego, or manifestation for the specific work of creating the world. On the other hand, considering Vishnu as the special manifestation of Parabrahma as creator of all things, we behold the god wrapt in a mysterious slumber, in which he imagines the production of worlds, and forthwith a lotus springs from his navel. In the centre of this lotus Brahma appears, that is, created things, and says the Purānas, "Vishnu, beholding the production of his body, was delighted."

Vishnu is seen floating or brooding upon the waters, supported by the serpent Seisha. Beside him sits his attendant queen, Lakshmi, the Goddess of Love. The panel is framed with pillars on either side, supporting an arch, sculptured with the forms of the various minor deities. Each corner of the composition contains decorations representative of four different incarnations of Vishnu, as worshipped by the Hindoos in various parts of India.

MATSYA AWATARA.

Vishnu, in the form of a fish, warns Manu, the progenitor of the human race, that the earth would be overwhelmed with a flood, and is commanded to build a ship for his safety. When the deluge came,

Manu, as advised, tied the ship, by means of a serpent, to the horn on the head of the fish-god, which bore the ship safely to the peak of Himabān.

KURMA AWATARA.

This incarnation was necessitated by the fact that the gods were in danger of losing their authority over the demons. In their distress, they applied to Vishnu for help, who told them to churn the sea of milk, that they might procure the *Amrita*, or water of life, by which they would be made strong, and promised to become the tortoise on which the mountain Mandara, as a churning stick, should rest. Thus Vishnu, in the form of a tortoise, served as a pivot for the mountain, which was whirled around in the milky sea.

PARAS HURAMA.

The incarnation of Paras Hurama or Hurama with Axe, was undertaken by Vishnu for the purpose of exterminating the Kshatriya, or Warrior Caste, which had tried to assert its authority over the Brahmanical or Priestly Caste. Twenty-one times Hurama, or Rama, is said to have cleared the earth of these men, by various means; but some few were preserved who were able to perpetuate the race. The story of Rama's life contains some of the most wonderful legends in the whole of the sacred writings of the Hindoos.

THE KRISHNA AWATARA.

Krishna, which means "the black, or dark one," is an incarnation "of a portion of the divine essence of Vishnu." He was a general champion of men in defending them from demons, and is probably but the glorification of a mortal hero, a Hindoo Hercules. He was also a great lover of women, and once assumed the forms of 16,000 lovers to as many women. At once god and mortal, he is one of the most popular manifestations of Vishnu.

VISHNU ENTHRONED.

The central lower medallion represents Vishnu enthroned with four arms. In one hand he bears the sceptre of supreme sovereignty; from another radiates flame, denoting him as Lord of the Sun or of the heavens. From his third hand springs a deer, as symbol of his creative powers, while with his fourth hand he invites the adoration of men.

No mythology is so glorious as a product of imaginative faith. No pagan pantheon is wrapt in such splendors. The heaven of Vishnu is of gold, with all its buildings of jewels. On a seat, glorious as the meridian sun, sitting on white lotuses, is Vishnu, and on his right hand Lakshmi, who shines like a continuous blaze of lightning, from whose body the fragrance of the lotus extends a thousand miles. The central medallion at the top of the design is a representation of Buddha, "The Enlightened."

BUDDHA.

The Brahmans have a legend that the Buddha is one of the many Avatars or manifestations of Vishnu, but the teachings of the true Buddha are so violently opposed to the teachings of Brahmanism that it must be conceded that this reformer was a mortal, the son of the King of Kapilavastu, adjoining Nepal. His name was Sakya Guatama, and is known as Buddha Guatama, to distinguish him from the Brahmanical Buddha. He taught that neither the doctrines nor the austerities of the Brahmans were of any avail in delivering man from old age, disease and death. Pain and pleasure are simply the result of Karma (works), no notice being taken of the existence or non-existence of God. He taught the Hindoo doctrine of the transmigration of souls. He assumed existence to be miserable, and that the highest conceivable good is to obtain entire exemption from existence. He taught the evil of caste distinctions, and all who embraced his tenets became members of a great brotherhood. His moral code is one of the most perfect in the world. He became the founder of a religion which, after a lapse of 2,000 years, is still professed by 455,000,000 of human beings. Sir Edwin Arnold's poem, "The Light of Asia," is a glorification of Buddha, one of the divine souls of the world. "Reverence to the jewel on the lotus;" "Honor to the incomparable Buddha," cry his myriads of followers.

In Hindoo art are expressed infinite weird forces and langors, the perpetual creation, destruction, and re-creation of the world. Fashioned in an age when the imagination of man was much more highly developed than at present, it sought to render in imperishable forms the energy and immobility of supreme power, clothing the forces of the universe with forms the most splendid the world has ever beheld.



HINDOO ART—DECORATIVE TABLEAU. REPRESENTING BRAHMA, VISHNU AND BUDDHA.